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TAGS: [KNNP](#) [MNUC](#) [IR](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [ENRG](#) [JP](#) [EUN](#)

SUBJECT: IRAN: FURTHER JAPANESE VIEWS ON P5+1 AND ROME
BILATERAL MEETING

REF: A. A) TOKYO 1541

[1](#)B. B) DUBAI 00028

Summary

1.(S) A Japanese diplomat in Brussels provided further insights on the June 3 meeting between Japanese Prime Minister Fukuda and Iranian President Ahmedinejad on the margins of an FAO conference in Rome as reported REF A. Our contact assessed that Iranian's recent efforts to stimulate Japanese engagement on the nuclear issue may be aimed at undermining the current UNSC-mandated diplomacy track. Japan is also seeking assurances that Italy not be formally admitted to the P5 1 group. An accomodation to Italy would trigger domestic pressure in Japan to pursue a similar status. The Japanese hope Italy can be satisfied with informal consultations and formal discussions in the G8 context. END SUMMARY

Ahmedinejad Courts Fukuda

[1](#)2. (S) One June 6, a Middle East expert at the Japanese Mission to the EU relayed further details of the June 3 meeting of Iranian President Ahmedinejad and Japanese President Fukuda in Rome, held on the margins of the Emergency Food Summit at the FAO in Rome. Our Japanese source maintained that Tokyo was initially reluctant to agree to the meeting, but ultimately assessed that the encounter would be useful for three reasons. First, the GOJ was under domestic pressure to engage Iran on the welfare and whereabouts of a Japanese citizen kidnapping in Iran. Moreover, it had been eight years since the last Japan-Iran Presidential meeting; Fukuda was interested in taking the measure of Ahmedinejad. Finally, Tokyo saw this as an opportunity to make clear its staunch national position that Iran must suspend its uranium enrichment activities.

[1](#)3. (S) The meeting, which was held at the request of the Iranians, lasted nearly one hour, in large part due to the necessity of triple interpretation (Farsi-English-Japanese). Referring directly to an internal Japanese memcon of the meeting, our contact confirmed the substance of the meeting, which focused on the kidnapping case of a Japanese student in Iran and Iran's nuclear weapons program. Japanese officials noted that Ahmedinejad carried himself in a serious and controlled manner, avoiding ideological rhetoric when

discussing the nuclear issue. Our source speculated that Ahmedinejad had opted for a low-key approach with Fukuda on the advice of Iranian Foreign Minister Mottaki, who had previously served as Iran's Ambassador to Japan.

Iran Drops Hints About Mediation Role

¶4. (S) According to the Brussels-based Japanese diplomat, Tehran has dropped several hints that it is looking to Japan and possibly Switzerland to mediate on the nuclear issue, including the following actions in recent months:

- the request for the Fukuda meeting in Rome;
- the effort to provide Japanese and Swiss governments (as well as UNSYG Ban) with copies of the May 13 letter to Solana on the Iranian counterproposal;
- the assignment of Iranian Ambassador Araghchi - the former legal advisor on nuclear issues -- to Tokyo;
- the offer in late May by Iranian Senior Presidential Advisor Moftaba Samareh Hashemi to visit Tokyo; and
- the February 2008 visit to Tokyo by Mohammed Javad Larijani, brother of newly elected Majles speaker (and former chief nuclear negotiator) Ali Larijani (REF B).

Nevertheless, our contact was skeptical of Iranian intentions, readily agreeing that such efforts to involve Japan (and Switzerland) could be part of a broader gambit to undermine Solana's lead role in support of the P5 1.

Japan Against Expansion of P5 1

5.(S) The Japanese are anxious about Italy's continued

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lobbying for a formal seat at the table during P5 1 consultations on Iran. While taking some comfort in German FM Steinmeier's June 5 public opposition to any change in the existing format, the Japanese would like similar, if private, assurances from the United States. Our contact warned that any expansion of the existing group would trigger domestic pressure in Japan to insist on inclusion as well. In Tokyo's view, the G8 is the appropriate venue for both itself and Italy to consult the EU-3 (Germany, France, UK) on Iran issues.

MURRAY

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